
Fact Sheet: Water Issues

Enbridge Oil Spill Marshall, Michigan

August 2010

For more information

If you have questions, comments or need more information about the Enbridge oil spill you can contact:

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EPA Community Involvement
Coordinator
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On the Web

EPA has established a website at www.epa.gov/enbridgespill to provide daily information about the response.

More contacts

Public:

A toll-free number for the public has been established for this emergency:
800-306-6837

Media members:

888-363-8632
spillpress@epa.gov

On Monday, July 26, 2010, Enbridge Energy Partners LLP reported that a 30-inch pipeline burst near Marshall, Mich. The company estimates more than 800,000 gallons of crude oil leaked into Talmadge Creek, a waterway that feeds the Kalamazoo River.

EPA has not been able to independently verify this number. The spill has affected up to 30 miles of the Kalamazoo River. The spill site, between Marshall and Battle Creek, includes wetlands, residential areas, farmland and businesses.

Drinking Water

Calhoun County Public Health Department (CCPHD) and Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services (HCS) officials have been evaluating the potential impact the spill has had on private water wells. Additionally, municipal and private water systems continue their normal water-testing schedules and methods.

Currently, the oil spill is not expected to have an immediate effect on well water. The health departments have been conducting a systematic evaluation of private drinking wells located within 200 feet of either side of the Kalamazoo River and Talmadge Creek. As a precaution, the CCPHD and HCS are providing bottled water for drinking and cooking to those who live in homes with wells in those areas.

No well contamination has been found but it could take 6 to 12 months for well water to be affected. CCPHD and HCS will continue to evaluate residents' well water in the affected area.

There have been no indications that the spill has impacted any municipal or private water supply system. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA limits the levels of certain contaminants in drinking water to protect human health. Water systems have routine water testing schedules and methods that they must follow to determine whether contamination is present. These rules also list acceptable techniques for treating contaminated water.

If you have concerns about your private well, contact the Calhoun County Public Health Department, 269-969-6341, or the Kalamazoo County Health Department at 269-373-5210.

By law, agencies managing water supply systems must publicly notify water users if their water supply does not meet EPA or Michigan standards through the newspaper, mail, radio, television or hand delivered flyers.

Impact on Waterways

Some restrictions have been placed on use of the water of Talmadge Creek and the Kalamazoo River.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has issued a ban on using the Kalamazoo River water for drinking by any animal or for irrigation.

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) is advising that people not eat fish from Talmadge Creek or the Kalamazoo River. MDCH advises that no one eat fish of any kind from these waters where oil is visible or oily odors are present. Do not eat any fish that smell of oil or have oil on them.

MDCH is also advising that people not touch or swim in the Kalamazoo River or Talmadge Creek and avoid the general area of the spill.

Specific area for the MDCH advisories include downstream (west) of I-69 on the Kalamazoo River to the west end of Morrow Lake. These advisories are temporary and will remain in effect until a determination is made by state and federal officials that

the Kalamazoo River is safe for fishing and swimming. More information is available through the MDCH website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdch>.

Response efforts

So far, containment measures have limited the impact on the Kalamazoo River. To control the spill as much as possible, EPA and Enbridge have been placing containment and absorbent boom at strategic points on the river. Boom is a barrier to control spills on water. Containment boom keeps the pollutant from spreading. Absorbent boom, in addition to stopping the spread, soaks up the contaminant.

The response also includes the use of vacuum trucks and skimmer equipment. Vacuum trucks literally suck the oil of the surface of the water.

The Mudpuppy II, EPA's newest research vessel, has been deployed to Morrow Lake and is currently taking water and lake bottom sediment samples to assess for potential contamination from the spill.